

## CLAIMS

1) A gripping member (4) connectable to a first pipe (2) supplying a pressurized work fluid, and connectable releasably to a standard endpiece (5) of a second pipe (3) supplying said work fluid, to define a fast-fit safety coupling (1), said gripping member (4) having a longitudinal axis (A), and comprising:

- a substantially tubular main body (10) connectable to said first pipe (2);
- a slide valve member (11) fitted to slide axially inside said main body (10), and maintained by first elastic means (12) in a closed position separating said first pipe (2) in fluidtight manner from the surrounding environment;
- releasable primary connecting means (25) defining a forward coupled position of said endpiece (5) inside said main body (10), in which said endpiece (5) exerts on said valve member (11) a thrust in opposition to and greater than the thrust exerted by said first elastic means (12), and keeps the valve member (11) in an open position hydraulically connecting said first and second pipe (2, 3); and
- releasable secondary connecting means (26) which cooperate with said endpiece (5) to retain it, upon release of said primary connecting means (25) and when disconnecting the endpiece (5) from said main body (10), in a withdrawn safety position in which said endpiece (5) is connected mechanically to said main body (10), and said valve member (11) is in the closed position enabling the work fluid in said main body (10) to leak out;

characterized in that said secondary connecting means (26) comprise releasable retaining means (50) which cooperate with said endpiece (5) to prevent it from being detached from said main body (10), are controlled by the pressure of the work fluid inside the main body (10), and are disabled by said pressure falling below a predetermined threshold value ( $P_0$ ).

2) A gripping member as claimed in Claim 1, characterized by comprising control means (34) movable along said axis (A) and in opposition to second elastic means (35) into a release position, in which they release said primary connecting

means (25) and define a stop for said retaining means (50) to keep the retaining means connected to said endpiece (5); said retaining means (50) being pushed, by the pressure of the work fluid inside said main body (10), against said control means (34) to prevent the control means from moving from said release position.

5           3) A gripping member as claimed in Claim 2, characterized in that said retaining means comprise at least one engaging member (50) movable radially, with respect to said main body (10), between an engaged position engaging said endpiece (5), and a release position releasing the endpiece (5); and in that said control means (34) comprise at least one ring nut (38) movable axially with respect to said main  
10   body (10) to vary the radial position of said engaging member (50).

          4) A gripping member as claimed in Claim 3, characterized in that said ring nut (38) comprises at least one inner radial projection (47) which rests axially against said engaging member (50) in said engaged position to retain the ring nut (38) in said release position.

15           5) A gripping member as claimed in Claim 3, characterized in that said engaging member (50) is mounted movably inside a radial through seat (51) formed in said main body (10), and is larger, radially with respect to said axis (A), than the radial dimension of said seat (51), so as to project inwards of said main body (10) in said engaged position, and outwards of the main body (10) in said release position;  
20   said ring nut (38) having an opposing surface (44) which, when facing said seat (51), pushes said engaging member (50) into said engaged position, and at least one inner cavity (45) adjacent to said opposing surface (44) and which, when aligned axially with said seat (51), at least partly houses said engaging member (50) in said release position.

25           6) A gripping member as claimed in Claim 5, characterized in that said projection (47) of said ring nut (38) is interposed between said cavity (45) and said opposing surface (44).